



The Nuggets

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True peace and
tranquillity will only be
realized when every soul
will have become the
well-wisher of all
mankind.

- Bahá'u'lláh

Baha'i Stories

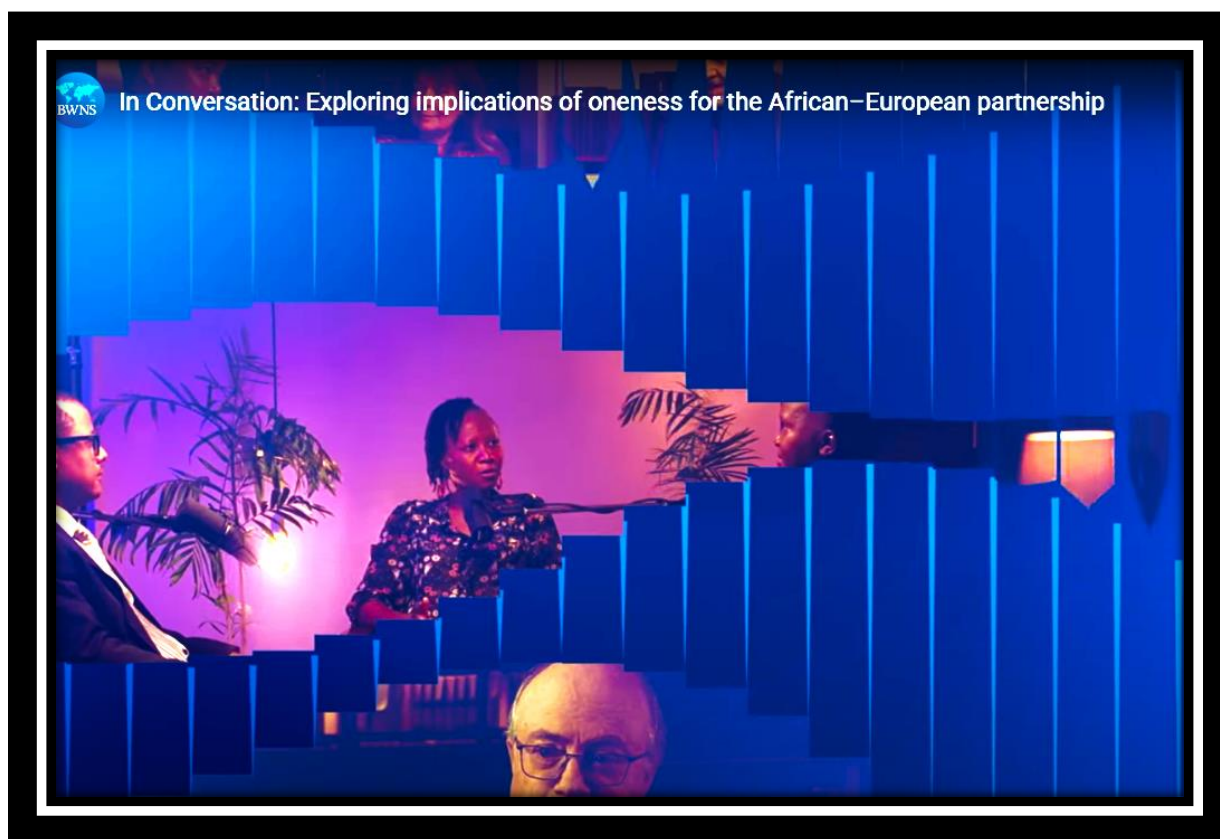
Friendship

In the morning friends and seekers surrounded 'Abdu'l-Bahá like moths. He spoke to them in these words: You must have deep love for one another. Go to see each other and be consoling friends to all. If a friend lives a little distance from the town, go to see him. Do not content yourselves with words

only but act according to the commandments of God. Hold weekly meetings and give feasts. Put forth your efforts to acquire spiritual perfections and to spread the knowledge of God. These are the attributes of the Bahá'ís. Otherwise, what use is there in being a Bahá'í in word alone. ~Mahmud's Diary

Events and News

Podcast explores implications of oneness for the African–European partnership



BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE — Amid increasing challenges and conflict in the world, a growing recognition is emerging of the interdependence of nations. This vital insight is addressed by the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) in international forums, where its contributions highlight that at a fundamental level, humanity is one.

In the latest podcast episode of the Bahá'í World News Service, representatives from the BIC's Addis Ababa and Brussels Offices explore the implications of this interdependence within the context of the African Union (AU)–European Union (EU) partnership which recognizes that the two continents are intertwined socially and economically.

The discussion explores how the progress, prosperity, and well-being of one continent are inextricably linked to the welfare of the other. It highlights, for example, European agricultural policies that not only

shape the economies of the European Union's member states, but also affect rural livelihoods across Africa.

Rachel Bayani of the Brussels Office emphasizes a crucial principle that is central to this discussion: "the inherent nobility of each human being." This idea, explains Mrs. Bayani, suggests that every person has the capacity to generate knowledge, which has profound implications for relationships among the two continents.

Rather than viewing knowledge as a commodity to be transferred from one place to another, this perspective sees every community as capable of contributing both to its own development and to a shared and growing body of knowledge.

Solomon Belay of the Addis Ababa Office elaborates on this idea by highlighting the principle of consultation as essential for fostering more harmonious and equitable relationships within and between societies. Mr. Belay emphasizes that by embracing consultation, individuals, communities, and institutions can "take actions that enable them to become agents of their own transformation."

News from the Twin Community of Jaipur

Here is a sample of activities in pictures of many junior youth groups, Ruhi study groups, children's classes, home visits and devotional and prayer meetings in different parts of Jaipur and Rajasthan. The commemoration of the Declaration of the Bab was celebrated in the Baha'i House, Jaipur. The 10-day campaign (25 May - 3 June) started at the Baha'i House. Around 60 participants are taking part in it. The volunteers will serve for ten days, providing their services in cooking and other tasks. A special prayer at 3.00 AM was said to commemorate the Ascension of Baha'u'llah.



Food for the Mind, Heart and Soul

Man Jumps Into Icy River to Save Woman Attempting Suicide

A Utah man's heroic decision to jump into a freezing river has saved a woman after she attempted to end her life on the morning of November 12.

Dane Entze and his wife were returning from a weekend getaway to celebrate their anniversary. They were crossing John's Hole Bridge in Idaho Falls, Idaho—the very spot where the couple had their first date—when they came upon the scene of what would be another “life-altering moment”.

“Upon looking down from the bridge above, looking down at the boat ramp below, my wife noticed a car driving down the boat ramp and entering the water,” the 36-year-old told Fox Weather.

While his wife called 911, Dane jumped out of the car, climbed a barbed wire fence, and ran to the boat launch.

He said he saw the car sinking into the Snake River, which is known for its dangerous undertow. But the woman emerged and he hollered to her asking if she was okay.

She then began swimming away from shore after telling Dane, ‘I’m committing suicide, and I don’t want to live anymore.’

Dane told her, ‘I don’t know who you are, but I’m here, and I love you, and I’m going to help you.

While the river swallowed up her car, he quickly swam approximately 120 feet from the shore to pull the woman back to the bank, risking freezing water conditions and outdoor temperatures of 19-degrees.

Entze said the woman didn’t have enough strength to resist him and wanted to be left alone, but he ignored her request.

“I knew we were out of time,” he told the Fox digital team.

The first responders arrived to render aid and transported the patient to the hospital in stable condition for a mental health evaluation and additional assistance. They also pulled out the submerged car.

“We would like to express our gratitude to the Good Samaritan who risked their own life to save another,” said the Idaho Falls Fire Department Public Information Officer. “We are incredibly thankful both parties were able to make it out of the freezing water.”

Dane said it caused him to appreciate the hardships others are going through, and has since spoken to the woman’s family, who hopes to meet him soon.

Poems

By Tahera Yadev:

Gratitude

*It is easy to be thankful
When you get what you desire,
But to constantly look for good
Even when the situation is dire,
That is gratitude.*

*If you can bring thankfulness
Into all that takes place,
Rather than keep waiting
For your sorrows to erase,
That is gratitude.*

*If simple things you enjoy
And small joys you relish,
If you don't take things for granted,
And if every memory you cherish,
That is gratitude.*

*That which turns chaos into order
Confusion into clarity,
Denial into acceptance,
Discord into solidarity,
That is gratitude.*

*That which turns a house into a home,
And a meal into a feast,
Tests into rewards,
And troubles to ease,
That is gratitude.*

*That which unlocks,
The fullness of life and it's purpose,
And turns what we have,
Into enough and surplus,
That is gratitude.*

*That which makes sense of our past
Brings peace for today,
Creates vision for tomorrow
And gives courage to hold on and pray,
That is gratitude.*

Tahera

Social Action

Texas junior youth group sparkles—and shines



In the Arlington mid-cities cluster of north Texas, one Bahá'í junior youth group has a service protocol. As soon as this group completes one of the books in their series, it plans a project to fulfill the service component of the junior youth curriculum. In effect, they collaborate with the community to determine needs, mobilize friends to join in and create a common vision for change.

Because all the participants of the group go to the Kennedale Junior High School, they thought that doing a service day at the school would be a fruitful way to give back. They invited a few sixth-grade friends from a second junior youth group that attend the same school to join them.

The kids had observed that the small district maintenance staff often takes a long time to get work orders completed because they cover five campuses. They brainstormed solutions. Each of the kids named something they wanted to see get done and what they could do to help.

A few of the junior youth met with the principal to present their ideas. The principal and office administrators were impressed with not only their suggestions but also with the kids' desire to serve. So, on Dec. 20, during winter break when school was empty, the junior youth all rallied for five hours of service. Together they:

- cleaned and disinfected every desk and all the door handles in each of the 40 rooms.
- pulled hundreds of old staples out of bulletin boards and walls.
- cleaned graffiti off bathroom stalls.
- walked the perimeter of the school and picked up soda bottles and random trash.
- created and hung three appreciation posters: One for the office staff, one for the custodians for making their school sparkle; one for the cafeteria ladies thanking them bunches for their lunches.

Afterwards, the junior youth and parents went out for a pizza dinner to celebrate and reflect on the experience. A few of them shared that the service project was a highlight of their school break. Here are excerpts of what the participants had to say:

Ava Brown, 13:

“I wanted to give to the community that is always giving to me. I think it’s crucial for the school environment to be clean. I enjoy group projects. My favorite part was getting to bond with other members by talking while working. For example, we wiped the bathroom stall doors and it was a tough job. But by talking and laughing, we got it done in no time!”

Maiya Hendricks, 12:

“The staff works so hard to make sure we have a great learning environment. My favorite part of the experience was working together to help make our school shine. My favorite part about being in a junior youth group is making new friends. Everyone is always so nice, and they listen when you have something to say.”

Ty Hayes, 13:

“The teachers spend so much time and effort into our education that I wanted to show my appreciation. My favorite part was getting to hang out with friends. It was helpful to meet with Ms. Bruce [the principal] ahead of time to better understand the greatest needs and how we can best be of service.”

Bryson Bruce, 12:

“I was happy to help the school’s appearance and I dislike when it’s not in good condition. I really wanted to help the custodians. That’s a lot of work for them. “

Caiden Soeun, 13:

“Many teachers and employees have to use a lot of their time to support us. I can think back and say I was able to help and give back to our school.”

Isabella Brown, 12:

“This was a great learning experience, and I was glad to help our school because the school is part of the community. I loved making the posters for the lunch ladies, custodians and front office staff.”

Noah Villagomez, 12:

“People don’t often do what we did. Some of the things we did probably never get done! I loved hearing everyone being so grateful and thanking all of us. We even had one of my old teachers mail us a card. When you serve with your friends it doesn’t even feel like work– it’s just a great place to be and very rewarding. We can’t wait to plan another one.”

From the Pages of History

Visit of Quddus to the Bab's maternal uncle in Shiraz

Quddus, with feelings of unshakable determination to carry out the expressed wishes of his Master, set out from Bushihr. Arriving at Shiraz, he was affectionately welcomed by Haji Mirza Siyyid Ali, who received him in his own home and eagerly enquired after the health and doings of his beloved Kinsman. Finding him receptive to the call of the new Message, Quddus acquainted him with the nature of the Revelation with which that Youth had already fired his soul. The Bab's maternal uncle, as a result of the endeavours exerted by Quddus, was the first, after the Letters of the Living, to embrace the Cause in Shiraz. As the full significance of the new-born Faith had remained as yet undivulged, he was unaware of the full extent of its implications and glory. His conversation with Quddus, however, removed the veil from his eyes. So steadfast became his faith, and so profound grew his love for the Bab, that he consecrated his whole life to His service. With unrelaxing vigilance he arose to defend His Cause and to shield His person. In his sustained endeavours, he scorned fatigue and was disdainful of death. Though recognised as an outstanding figure among the business men of that city, he never allowed material considerations to interfere with his spiritual responsibility of safeguarding the person, and advancing the Cause, of his beloved Kinsman. He persevered in his task until the hour when, joining the company of the Seven Martyrs of Tihiran, he, in circumstances of exceptional heroism, laid down his life for Him.

The next person whom Quddus met in Shiraz was Ismu'llahu'l-Asdaq, Mulla Sadiq-i-Khurasani, to whom he entrusted the copy of the Khasa'il-i-Sab'ih, and stressed the necessity of putting into effect immediately all its provisions. Among its precepts was the emphatic injunction of the Bab to every loyal believer to add the following words to the traditional formula of the adhan: "I bear witness that He whose name is Ali-Qabl-i-Muhammad⁽²⁾ is the servant of the Baqiyyatu'llah."⁽³⁾ Mulla Sadiq, who in those days had been extolling from the pulpit-top to large audiences the virtues of the imams of the Faith, was so enraptured by the theme and language of that treatise that he unhesitatingly resolved to carry out all the observances it ordained. Driven by the impelling force inherent in that Tablet, he, one day as he was leading his congregation in prayer in the Masjid-i-Naw, suddenly proclaimed, as he was sounding the adhan, the additional words prescribed by the Bab. The multitude that heard him was astounded by his cry. Dismay and consternation seized the entire congregation. The distinguished divines, who occupied the front seats and who were greatly revered for their pious orthodoxy, raised a clamour, loudly protesting: "Woe betide us, the guardians and protectors of the Faith of God! Behold, this man has hoisted the standard of heresy. Down with this infamous traitor! He has spoken blasphemy. Arrest him, for he is a disgrace to our Faith." "Who," they angrily exclaimed, "dared authorise such grave departure from the established precepts of Islam? Who has presumed to arrogate to himself this supreme prerogative?" ~ The Dawn Breakers & Nabil's Narrative

Sharing

Douglas Wilson's artwork and Badi's words:

Yearning to be a child at heart again.
To laugh with a pure heart and with the
eye of childish curiosity and
wonderment to rediscover the world
again.



News and Nuggets from Other Religions and Communities

Buddhism



Introduction: *Buddhism is one of the world's major religions, encompassing a diverse array of beliefs, practices, and cultural expressions. Rooted in the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama,*

known as the Buddha, Buddhism is not only a religion but also a way of life. To be Buddhist is to embrace a set of principles, practices, and a philosophy that guide one's life towards understanding and transcending suffering. In this Blog, we will explore what it means to be a Buddhist, focusing on the core tenets and practices that define this spiritual path.

The Four Noble Truths

At the heart of Buddhist philosophy are the Four Noble Truths, which lay the foundation for understanding the nature of human suffering and the path to liberation:

1. ***The Truth of Suffering (Dukkha):*** *Buddhism recognizes that suffering is an inherent part of human existence. It encompasses physical and emotional pain, as well as the dissatisfaction and restlessness that permeate our lives.*
2. ***The Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Samudaya):*** *The Second Noble Truth identifies desire, attachment, and craving as the root causes of suffering. It is our unquenchable desires and attachments that lead to suffering.*
3. ***The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Nirodha):*** *Buddhism teaches that it is possible to end suffering by letting go of attachment and desire. This cessation is referred to as Nirvana, a state of ultimate liberation and bliss.*
4. ***The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (Magga):*** *The Fourth Noble Truth outlines the Eightfold Path, which serves as a guide to living a life in accordance with the principles of Buddhism. This path includes right understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.*

The Eightfold Path

To be Buddhist is to follow the Eightfold Path, a set of ethical and mental guidelines that lead to spiritual awakening and the cessation of suffering. The path encompasses three categories: wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental development. Practicing right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration, Buddhists strive to live a life in accordance with these principles.

The Five Precepts

The Five Precepts are another core aspect of Buddhist practice. To be Buddhist means to adhere to these moral guidelines, which include refraining from harming living beings, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, and using intoxicants. These precepts serve as the foundation for a virtuous and ethical life.

Meditation and Mindfulness

Buddhism places a strong emphasis on meditation and mindfulness practices. To be Buddhist is to cultivate inner awareness and mental clarity through meditation, with the goal of gaining insight

into the nature of reality and the self. Meditation techniques like Vipassana and Zen are employed to develop mindfulness and concentration.

Compassion and Loving-Kindness

Compassion and loving-kindness are central to Buddhist ethics. Being Buddhist means cultivating a sense of compassion and kindness toward all sentient beings. The Metta (loving-kindness) meditation practice is an integral part of this process, helping practitioners develop feelings of goodwill and love for themselves and others.

Impermanence and Non-Self

Buddhism teaches that all things are impermanent and that there is no permanent, unchanging self. To be Buddhist means to contemplate the impermanence of all phenomena and to understand that clinging to a fixed sense of self leads to suffering. This insight is central to the Buddhist understanding of reality.

Conclusion

To be Buddhist is to embrace a profound spiritual journey guided by the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, the Five Precepts, meditation, compassion, and the recognition of impermanence and non-self. It is a path of self-discovery, ethical living, and mindfulness that seeks to transcend suffering and attain a state of ultimate liberation and peace. Buddhism is a diverse and multifaceted tradition, and while these principles are foundational, the expression of being Buddhist can vary widely, reflecting the rich tapestry of Buddhist thought and practice around the world.

From the Editor's Desk

Why We Can't Forget the Pandemic's Hard-Earned Lessons

As painful and challenging as the pandemic was, it brought many issues to the forefront for humanity to ponder and resolve. We obviously haven't adequately dealt with those issues in the past. But as people have gone back to "business as usual" when we have entirely stopped fearing COVID-19, I worry that the lessons the pandemic brought have been forgotten.

Human Fragility — and Our Spiritual Resilience

The COVID crisis has shown us that we are not invincible. No matter how many inventions and discoveries we make or how many gadgets we create to make life more convenient, we cannot protect ourselves from future pandemics that will kill millions of people if we do not come together and overcome our differences. A tiny virus, we now know, could jeopardize the survival of humanity. That stark fact has created a rude awakening for many.

However, the pandemic also proved the ingenuity and resilience of the human spirit gifted to us by God as we rushed to heal the sick, create and distribute vaccines, and support each other through a global economic crisis.

This resilience has helped humanity progress since the very beginning of our species when we faced fierce animals, survived famines, and endured wars. The human spirit can solve problems no matter how difficult and complex they are.

The Beauty and Tenderness of Humanity

We took many things for granted until the pandemic reminded us how vital they are for our emotional and physiological well-being.

For me, the biggest loss was the smiles. I love smiling, and I joked about how my smiles were wasted since nobody saw them under my mask. It was such a tragedy not to touch or hug our loved ones, and I hope that we never forget how essential that is for our happiness.

As we realized that there are other things in life, money became less important. We became less concerned with physical appearances. It was interesting for me to see so many singers that I admired sing in virtual concerts without all the tools to enhance the quality of their voices. I could listen to their natural voices and appreciate them more than the professionally produced versions. Hopefully, this time has helped us accept ourselves and others as we are.

The Importance of Nature

This lesson was interesting for two reasons: one, it affirmed the benefits of nature's healing powers for humans' psyche and happiness; two, it reminded us of the power of nature to heal itself. During the pandemic, nature made a remarkable recovery, proving that we can solve our environmental crisis if we take steps to reduce our carbon footprint.

I hope that seeing these changes has made us more sensitive to nature's needs and motivated us to try to protect our environment before it is too late.

“We're In This Together”

Ordinary people and politicians repeated this phrase time and again. Some used it as a slogan without fully understanding its implications.

The pandemic exposed, to a greater degree, the disparities in opportunity, healthcare, and financial security between communities of different races and genders in the workforce. People of colour suffered a greater infection rate and the greatest economic devastation, on top of a new wave of racially motivated violence in the United States, while women were forced to abandon the workforce at a greater rate than men. While we should have all been doing this together, many found themselves at a disadvantage. Supporters of change convey that the time of talking has passed, and we need to take action to correct past errors.

We also learned that we could not depend on national boundaries to solve the problem of the pandemic. Although we put restrictions in place for movement, they exist because we all know that as long as the whole world isn't vaccinated, the problem will not be solved.

We have lost so much during this pandemic. Millions of lives were cut short. Billions of dollars have been spent, and more will be spent on economic recovery. There are emotional scars to heal. It would be even more tragic if all the suffering goes for nought and the lessons are forgotten.

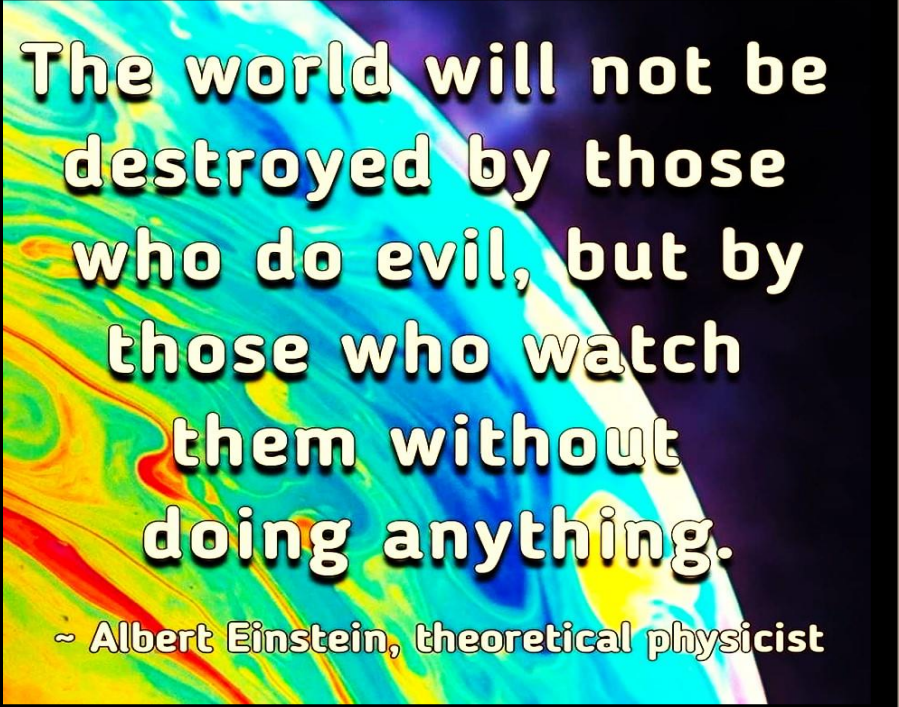
The Importance of Prayer and Meditation

During the toughest moments of the pandemic, many of us found solace in prayer and reconnected with our meditation routines. Many adopted meditation into their daily lives or strongly felt the need for prayers for their spiritual health — even those who had not considered prayer as an option for their spiritual health before.

For me, meditation and prayer became an essential part of my daily routine. These words reassured me and helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel as I strived to function with a positive attitude:

“The darkness of this gloomy night shall pass away. Again the Sun of Reality will dawn from the horizon of the hearts. Have patience, wait but do not sit idle; work while you are waiting; smile when you are wearied with monotony; be firm while everything around you is being shaken; be joyous while the ugly face of despair grins at you; speak aloud while the malevolent forces of the nether world try to crush your mind; be valiant and courageous while men all around you are cringing with fear and cowardice ... Continue your journey to the end. The bright day is coming.” ~Abdu’l-Baha

The suddenness of the pandemic and the speed with which it spread made us realize how uncertain life is and how, in no time, our world can drastically change. It has given us a hint of the problems that could develop if countries do not work together to solve problems, leaving behind political and financial greed, and showed us how we might prepare for such events in the future.



**The world will not be
destroyed by those
who do evil, but by
those who watch
them without
doing anything.**

~ Albert Einstein, theoretical physicist

Writings to Ponder and Practice

“For the tongue is a smoldering fire, and excess of speech a deadly poison. Material fire consumeth the body, whereas the fire of the tongue devoureth both heart and soul. The force of the former lasteth but for a time, whilst the effects of the latter endureth a century.” ~Bahá’u’lláh

For sharing materials and questions, write to bshams@telus.net